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OUR NATIONAL CRISIS.

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THE RELIGIOUS SENTIMENTS PROPER FOR OUR  
NATIONAL CRISIS.

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# A SERMON

DELIVERED ON SABBATH EVENING, APRIL 23, 1865.

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BY HENRY SMITH, D. D.,

*Pastor of the North Presbyterian Church, Buffalo, N. Y.*

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BUFFALO, April 26, 1865.

REV. HENRY SMITH, D. D.,

*Dear Sir:*—The sermon of last Sabbath evening, devoted to the consideration of the sentiments proper to be cherished by our citizens in the present crisis of the nation, was listened to by a large and intelligent congregation with profound respect.

Appreciating the importance of those religious and civil truths, enunciated and so eloquently enforced by you upon that occasion, and being desirous that society may profit from a more extended diffusion of sentiments so elevated and honorable to humanity, thereby promoting the great interests of Christianity and good government, we respectfully solicit a copy of the discourse for publication.

Very truly yours,

LEWIS F. ALLEN,	D. TAYLOR,	F. W. BREED,
GEO. R. BABCOCK,	JAS. SHELDON,	C. W. BUTLER,
PASCALL P. PRATT,	O. P. RAMSDELL,	OSCAR COBB,
E. P. BEALS,	O. L. NIMS,	F. P. WOOD,
JAS. D. WARREN,	C. W. HARVEY,	GEO. WADSWORTH,
H. R. KETCHUM,	H. STILLMAN,	J. V. W. ANNIN,
WM. B. FLINT,	JASON SEXTON,	R. S. BURROWS,
R. D. SHERMAN,	A. J. RICH,	S. M. CHAMBERLAIN.
C. E. YOUNG,		

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BUFFALO, April 26, 1865.

HON. MESSRS. ALLEN, BABCOCK, SHELDON, AND OTHERS,

*Gentlemen:*—The sermon to which your note refers, though rapidly written, in the discharge of the ordinary weekly duties of the preacher's work, contains sentiments which have long held with me the authority of fixed principles. I am happy to find them substantially endorsed by gentlemen so well qualified as yourselves to judge of the duties and responsibilities of American citizenship.

In compliance with your request, I place the manuscript in your hands.

I am, very truly yours,

HENRY SMITH.



# A SERMON.

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Speak Lord, for thy servant heareth.—1 SAMUEL, III: 9.

You will not fail to remember the occasion on which this solemn appeal to Jehovah, invoking a divine communication, was made. It was the dictation of the head of the Hebrew hierarchy, and the Chief Magistrate of the nation, to that consecrated child who was destined by God hereafter to become the leader and prophetic teacher of the people. The period was one of universal popular, political, and religious corruption. Nay more, this corruption had reached the very fountains of power. The springs of the national life were tainted by the reckless violation of the constitution of the government, civil and ecclesiastical, at the hands of the accredited rulers of the land. The cup of the divine patience was full to overflowing. The tempest of God's wrath hung black and heavy over the guilty nation. The fiery bolts of retribution were just ready to break

forth, when the Majesty of heaven summoned the attention of the prophet-child by that mysterious call, to which the words of the text are the reply dictated by the aged high-priest and judge of Israel:—"Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth." Listen to the response: "Behold I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle." What that thing was, you remember well. The land was drenched in blood; and the high priest and chief magistrate of Israel fell dead under the stroke of God. I shall attempt to run no parallel between the moral condition of the Hebrew commonwealth under the administration of Eli, and our own to-day. In some particulars it fails. In others it is strikingly similar. God has often spoken to us as a nation in the soft and persuasive accents of his mercy, and we have refused to hear. Now he has spoken to us, as he did to them, in the thunders of his righteous indignation. He has done to us already that awful thing, at which both the ears of every hearer have tingled. The whole land is draped in the weeds of mourning. Every temple of God in the loyal States bears, or has borne, within the last week, the sable livery of woe. The heart of the nation is broken. The voice of the whole people has burst into one loud wail of lamentation. There is not a loyal man or woman in the land whose bosom this last arrow from the quiver of the Almighty has



not pierced to the core. Are we ready at length to listen to the voice of God? True, indeed, we have hardly yet recovered our equanimity. This tempest of grief has burst suddenly upon us, like a tornado upon a populous sea-port. The great waves of emotion have driven us from our moorings; some, it may be, in one direction, and some in another. But the storm has passed. The mountain billows are subsiding. Is it not time that we at least begin to make the effort to come to our anchorage? Taught by this fearful calamity, it may be that we can find a firmer bottom, a safer holding ground, for the flukes of our national faith. In addressing you last Sabbath morning, I raised the question: "What are the Christian duties which are indicated by the present circumstances of the nation?" The topic was deferred to a calmer moment. I recur to it this evening. But as all right action is preceded and conditioned by right sentiment, let me change the form of the subject and ask your attention for a little while to,

THE SENTIMENTS PROPER TO BE CHERISHED IN THE PRESENT NATIONAL CRISIS.

Stunned and prostrated by this last terrible blow from the hand of God, it may be we have hardly yet sufficiently recovered, distinctly to understand his voice. Nevertheless, while the awe of his Divine Majesty is

yet upon our spirits, it surely behooves us to present ourselves before the holy oracle of his Truth, saying: *Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth.*

What response do we begin already to hear? If I do not altogether misunderstand the voices of God's providences, interpreted by the light of the Holy Scriptures, they may be summed up in one great word —

*Faith.*

My friends, that series of great and terrible events which for the last four years has engrossed the heart of the nation, and which has just culminated in the brutal murder of the Chief Magistrate of the Republic, summons our attention to-night not so much to those aspects of Christian faith, which stand connected with the question of personal salvation, as to those aspects of it which bear upon national ethics and our civil duties. The entire secular and religious press of the land recognizes now, as never before, the great truth that God is speaking to the whole nation. What we are summoned, therefore, to do, is to endeavor to catch the articulate accents of that awful voice, as interpreted by the teachings of his holy word. The voice which we all have heard from heaven, audible and distinct, is this: *Have faith in God.* We believe that God has spoken. We admit that this is the solemn utterance of the oracle of the Divine Providence. But

what does it mean? What are its applications? These questions remain to be considered, and to be answered by the responses of divine revelation. Let us endeavor to elicit at least a portion of these responses. This awful voice, then, seems to me to say to us —

I. First of all, *Have faith in your Institutions of National Government.*

By this is not meant that our institutions of national government are absolutely perfect; much less is it meant that they can work themselves. They are simply an instrument in the hands of an intelligent, virtuous, and God-fearing people for the accomplishment of the very highest ends of civil government; and in this aspect they are worthy of our most hearty confidence.

1. We are to have faith in their essential righteousness. We are not left without a light from God's Word, reflected upon this very point. Our national institutions were framed around the great idea which has been so admirably expressed by our incoming President, that "Government was made for man, and not man for Government." This governmental frame-work has been pronounced by the most intelligent and philosophic, as well as sympathetic and admiring foreign observer, who has yet attempted to analyze the forces of our political life, to be not a federal, but an incomplete national government. In the sense intended by

him, this is perfectly true, and I shall have occasion to refer to it again. I allude to it now simply to direct your attention to the fact, that this so-called incomplete national government is the very form and frame-work of human government prescribed by God himself, for the accomplishment of the very end had in view by the framers of our own institutions. Look at the structure of the Hebrew Republic, as it came from the hands of its divine architect. Twelve distinct, and, in some sense, independent states, each having its own distinct territory, with perfectly defined geographical boundaries; each having its lands distributed among the families composing it and possessed in fee-simple by the tillers of the soil; each having its own rulers, elected by the free suffrages of the people; each having its own system of jurisprudence, connected by the principle of *appeals* with the very highest judicatory in the land. From the elders of his city to the elders of his tribe; from the elders of his tribe to the great national council of the Seventy, every man might carry his claim for justice to the highest judicatory in the land. I can not go into details. But above all this system of personal and tribal freedom and justice, sat the Supreme Government of the land, possessed of a written constitution, sovereign within its own limited sphere of sovereignty, with God as its executive head, charging itself with the education of the nation, with the incul-

cation upon the minds of the whole people of the great principles of the National Constitution, civil and religious; holding the balances of national justice, and through the responses of the Urim and the Thummim, claiming also, I think, as well, the right of making peace and war. Such in substance was the frame-work of the Hebrew government, as it came from the hand of God. Well has a clear-headed writer said of it, "It preserved in the hands of the people as much personal liberty as ever was or can be combined with a permanent and efficient national government." This land of ours was settled by men who believed in God. Freedom!—"Freedom to worship God," was the great sentiment which peopled this new world. Is it any wonder that fleeing from the edicts of the star-chambers and blood-councils of Europe; from the feudalism and despotism of the old world; from countries whose animus was not "government for man, but man for government," these men should have carefully investigated the principles of Bible liberty? that they should most anxiously have inculcated upon their children those great principles of civil and religious freedom which they found everywhere in the word of God? Is it any wonder that their descendants, taught by their precepts, and breathing their spirit, when the great task of framing a national government was devolved upon them, should have turned their eyes reverently to these venerable gov-

ernmental institutions of the Hebrews? So far as the differing circumstances of the times seemed to permit, the framework of our national government, in its great essential features, was a reproduction of that of the Hebrews. The spirit of justice, righteousness, liberty and equal rights is its animating spirit. The word *slave* was odious to the framers of our national constitution. It is not to be found in that venerable instrument. And if the local institutions of some of the States forced upon it a tacit recognition of the existence of slavery in the country, it is a matter of devout thanksgiving to God, that the great bulwark of our national life needs no alteration to adapt it to that condition of universal liberty which the act of God, overruling the madness of Treason inflamed by the spirit of oppression, is giving to the whole land. Even the lamentable omission of a direct recognition of God, in consequence of which the document has been charged with political atheism, can not convict it of atheism. It breathes the spirit of God's own teachings, as touching the frame-work of civil and religious liberty; and it is no violation, but rather an outgrowth, of the spirit of the American constitution that the coin of the United States is henceforth to bear the great legend, "In God we trust." The frame-work of our national institutions is essentially righteous. The institutions of government which have legitimately sprung from it are essentially

righteous. And the voice of God's Providence, which for four long and terrible years has been waxing louder and louder, and which to-day is sounding in our ears as with the blast of trumpet, seems to me to say: Have faith in the righteousness of these institutions; beware of violating them; beware of corrupting them.

2. But again that voice says to us: Have faith in the *permanence* of these national institutions.

Our national government has been called an experiment. It is so. It is an experiment testing the question whether popular liberty and political equality can exist on earth. It is an experiment testing the question whether a government founded in the spirit of the principle that "government was made for man, and not man for government," can possibly bear the strain to which the evil forces of ambition and despotism will subject it: whether in the long procession of the ages we have yet reached the point of human civilization in which, under an organized human government, man as man, all men, of all shades of color, of all types of intellect, of all grades of wealth, can stand before the common Father of the Universe, possessed of equal civil and religious rights: can each one of them, with no slave-driver's lash brandished above him, with no ensign of civil or ecclesiastical despotism waving over him, look up to God and say, Father, I am a man;



I am a freeman; made in thine image; bound by my conscience to thy holy government: Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth and will obey? My friends, it is useless to deny it, we have all had our fears touching the issue of this great experiment of popular liberty. We have had occasion to fear. I have heard men in Buffalo say this government can not survive. And the rise and fall of gold, following the disasters and successes of the national arms, have spoken these fears when the tongue has not uttered them. Perhaps the fears of the most intelligent thinkers among us have gathered chiefly around the most apparent point of weakness in our civil institutions: I mean the point of a *Divided Sovereignty*. I have already referred to the remark of De Tocqueville, that our general government is not a federal, but, in distinction from it, an incomplete national government. It is easier, he says, to invent new things than new names. The American government is a new thing under the sun. It is a new thing with an old name—a *Federal Republic*. In all other confederations, as for example the Swiss, the central government has acted not upon the people, but upon the states. In this it acts directly upon the people. Forgetting, it would seem, the Hebrew Republic, he pronounces the American Government a new thing in the world. It is not, therefore, what it calls itself, a Federal Republic, but an incomplete nationality. Find-



ing the idea of sovereignty in the power of enacting laws, and finding this power divided between the states and the central government, he recognizes in our institutions the existence of a divided sovereignty. That is not our idea of sovereignty in America. But, nevertheless, here he finds the point of our national weakness; a weakness, in his opinion, so great, that in case of a foreign war, the government would be unable to cope with the power of a consolidated monarchy, of equal resources, in its immediate vicinity. The states, he thinks, whose interests should be impaired by the war, would find pretexts, as did Connecticut and Massachusetts in 1812, for disobeying the mandates of the central government, and the government would go to wreck. But happily, he says, we have no such war to fear. Separated from the consolidated governments of Europe by a wide and stormy ocean, we are safe. Having nothing to fear from abroad, he pronounces our national institutions, impossible elsewhere, admirably adapted to our peculiar geographical position on the globe. Little did he foresee the tremendous strain which was to be put upon our government by this same perverted doctrine of a divided sovereignty; yea, more, from the claim of the handmaid to be the mistress, reducing the general government from the rank of a sovereign to that of a mere commercial agent. This, as you well know, is the pestilent theory of Secession. We have

lived it down; we have fought it through; and the hydra of Secession will never again rear its hissing head upon this continent. The nation has demonstrated its perfect nationality. We have had for years nothing to fear from abroad. We have no longer anything to fear at home. When the sun of peace, whose blessed beams now gild and glorify our national horizon, shall reveal to our eyes its full-orbed splendor, it will shine upon the dishonored grave of the institution of American Slavery: an institution whose lying appeals to human cupidity, lust, and thirst for power, could alone have seduced men, whom God had gifted with an intellect, a heart and a conscience, to adopt and act upon so absurd a doctrine. Slavery will be dead and buried, and with slavery dead, the whole wide field of the nation will be open to the action of free schools, a free press, a free pulpit, and a free Bible. Corrupt indeed and recreant to her high trust will the Church of God in America have become if our national government shall ever again be put in peril by the awful ferocities of civil war. The voice of God's providence, then, interpreted by the blessed humanities of his holy gospel, bids us to have faith in the permanence of our national institutions. Treason has done its worst upon us. It has just dealt an expiring blow, which would have thrown France into convulsions, and prostrated its imperial government in the dust. What has it done

to us? It has pierced the heart of the nation with an inexpressible sorrow. It has clad her in the weeds of mourning, and brought her to bow herself in an agony of grief before the Majesty of Heaven. That is all. The government lives. Its regular action has not been disturbed for a moment. Our free institutions still live. Let us believe it, they shall live forever.

We will turn now to another interpretation of the voice of God's Providence. It is this:

## II. *Have faith in your National Rulers.*

My friends, it is very difficult for us to have faith in man. We know too well, from our own hearts, his weakness and his corruptibility. "Let us fall now," said David, "into the hand of God, for his mercies are great, but let me not fall into the hand of man." Nevertheless, men are God's instruments, and in certain relations faith in God necessitates and renders imperative faith in man. Most conspicuous among these relations is that which exists between subjects and rulers. Civil government, of whatever form, is from God. The powers that be, are ordained of God. Even under bad and tyrannical governments, the word of God counsels submission, and, so far forth as obedience does not conflict with the claims of God's universal sovereignty and the homage of the individual

soul due to him, it counsels obedience. Paul lost his head under the tyranny of Nero, but he never lifted his hand against it. Ignatius was torn by the lions of the Coliseum under the despotism of Trajan, but so far from rebelling, he blessed the hand which placed upon his brow the crown of martyrdom. The very slaves themselves are enjoined to be subject to their masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward. — What then? Does God's word sanction despotism? No. But it commands those who are subject to it, and who by no legal methods can reach it, to leave the removal of it to Him. How he can and will remove it he has taught us most impressively in that great national tragedy which has now reached its fifth act. He sends a spirit of madness upon the despot and places in his hand a dagger, wherewith to slay himself. God makes no provision in his word for rebellion and regicide. It must needs be under the Holy Providence of God that such offences come, but woe be to those men by whom they come. Passive obedience, and submission to wrong, is the counsel of God's word, even under tyrannies. But what shall we say of the sentiments of citizens towards rulers, under a free popular government like our own? This government, as we have seen, was formed upon a model devised by the wisdom of God himself. Its great principles are essentially righteous. Its foun-

dations are laid in the great doctrines of justice, equity, equal rights, and universal liberty. The *legitimate* action of such a government must be righteous. The men who are placed in power under the legitimate movements of such a government, should command not only our civil obedience, but our hearty sympathy, support, and confidence. All maligning of the private character of Rulers, all factious opposition to their measures, are blows stricken at the heart of liberty. Aye, but suppose they are bad men? Suppose they do not represent the principles of the government, and our views of the policy which the exigencies of the nation demand? What then? Are we then to approve? to give them our confidence? On this point two words.

1. By possibility we may be wrong. By possibility they may not be the utterly bad men which a partizan press, in a contested election, may have taught us to believe them. By possibility their policy does not so utterly misrepresent the will of God and the true and fundamental principles of the government as our own associations have led us to fear. Even if we do not admit the truth of the maxim that the *vox populi* is the *vox Dei*, the presumption is that after all the light which has been thrown upon the issues of a contested election, by an omnipresent press, everywhere doing its work among a reading people, the decision which

is reached by the final suffrages of such a people will be essentially right; at least that it can not be so far wrong as fatally to compromise the great principles of the government. The great struggle which has been upon us has taught us the duties of minorities under a government like this. It is to submit. Yea more, it is to yield a cheerful support to the rulers who represent the will of the people, and embody the sovereignty of the land. All honor to those noble millions, who, differing in their views of national policy from that which found an expression in the election of our present rulers, rallied around the government in the hour of its supreme trial; who laid aside their political animosities, forgot their political prejudices, and have stood for four long and terrible years "a wall of fire around the ark of our liberties." Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and all sympathy with it under such a government as this is a crime against the last hope of human freedom, in a world like ours. Eternal infamy, therefore, to that traitorous element in our loyal states; to that nest of venomous vipers, desperate and debauched in moral and political character, and, let us hope in God, insignificant in numbers as well, which from pot-houses, brothels and theatres, has spit its traitorous spite at the constituted authorities of the country; and which, at last, has found an expression, faithfully representing its spirit,



in the most enormous CRIME which stains the bloody annals of our guilty world.

2. But again, by possibility we may be right. By possibility the people may be wrong. What then is to be done? Where is now the remedy to be found? Certainly not in endeavoring to obstruct the wheels of government, nor in a factious opposition to the rulers, whom the free suffrages of the people have placed in authority. A government like ours can not possibly long stand among a people too ignorant to comprehend its principles, or too corrupt to sustain them. It will fall by its own weight. It will pass away by the act of God. But when it falls the last hope of popular liberty will fall with it. This indeed has been the expectation and the prophecy of despots all over the world, as touching the fate of our own Republic. It has found, as you know, during this rebellion, a practical expression in European governments, from which we had expected better things. But this government is not to fall. The hand of God has been over it, and, so long as we remain faithful to Him, will be over it forever. How awfully has he admonished us of the high and solemn responsibility which attaches to the character of an American citizen. How solemnly has he admonished us to place our political opinions, our civil action, and our judgment of the moral character demanded in the rulers of a free re-

public, under the instruction and guardianship of his Holy Word! That Word declares that: He who ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God. That Word declares: Thou shalt provide out of all the people, able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place *such* over them, to be rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds; yea more, to be rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. In a government like this we can do without splendor of intellect, without brilliancy of oratory, yea, even without profound statemanship. One thing we can not do without. We can not do without *Honesty*, without moral integrity in our rulers. No Christian, nay more, no man, who believes that there sits in the heavens a just and righteous God, who watches over the destinies of nations, has any right to cast his vote, at the dictation of any party, or in view of any scheme of self-interest, for a man as a ruler, the soundness of whose moral character he has reasonable occasion to question. If he does, let him close his mouth in shame when he finds in office bad and wicked men, who do not represent his own views of national righteousness, or of a just line of national policy. He himself has sanctioned a principle which utterly disarms him of every reasonable pretext for refusing a hearty support to the powers that be.—But even if this is not the case, and if he



has never thus profaned the high and solemn responsibility of the elective franchise, and bad and covetous men, nevertheless, by sophistry and chicane, have grasped the reins of power, he would do well, before he resorts to the delusive remedy of faction, solemnly to ask himself whether he has fully discharged his duty as a citizen: whether he has done, and is doing, all that in him lies to purify the fountains of power, by educating, enlightening, and endeavoring to shape the popular mind, and by imbuing it with a sense of responsibility to God and to mankind, for the manner in which it dares to exercise the high functions of American citizenship. Here lies the true and effectual remedy for all the evils which can arise in a free government like our own. It is the only political remedy allowable to a just, conscientious, and God-fearing man. God has taught us to pray for kings, and for all that are in authority. He has nowhere taught us to revile and oppose them. On the contrary, he has taught us that whosoever resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God, and that they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.

It remains to say, before I conclude, that this voice from heaven, interpreted by the voice of revelation, seems to speak to us to-day, saying:

### III. *Have faith in the Providence of God.*

God has delivered us in six troubles, let us be sure that in the seventh no evil shall befall us, which shall peril the life of the nation. He has brought light out of darkness, order out of confusion, victory out of defeat, inexhaustible national resources out of the perils of national bankruptcy; an ever waxing population out of the immense and terrible slaughter of civil war. The starry flag of the Union waves to-day, in the triumph of God's holy retribution for treason, over the very city where secession had its birth; over the very fortress where the madness of treason struck it down in dishonor. The spirit of God has waked in the hearts of our people an intense loyalty, which we had not even imagined to exist, sleeping as it did unseen beneath the superficial guise of an apparently entire national engrossment in the arts of peace and in the pursuit of gain. We have been called a covetous and grasping people. It was always a libel on the nation, and, God be thanked, now we know it to have been a libel. The accumulations of years have been poured out like water in the cause of the country. Never has the earth witnessed such immense and costly offerings as have been laid by private citizens in this war upon the altar of an imperilled country. Our chivalrous foes have stigmatized us as a nation of boors, of hinds, of mud-

sills;—they have been taught to know how much valor lies hid beneath the rough exterior of the sons of labor, who have breathed all their lives the atmosphere of freedom; and been taught all their lives to acknowledge and worship God. The nation was never before so great, so strong, so free, so patriotic, so rich in everything which constitutes national dignity and national power as it is to-day. Its government is, at this moment, I verily believe it, the strongest government upon the globe. Who hath poured into the heart of the nation this spirit? Who hath poured out upon us, as from a cloud bursting under its freight of blessing, these immense resources of wealth and of men? Can we have any doubt? It is the God of our fathers, and our God. It is God, and not man who hath gotten us the victory. And now, when this last supreme agony is rending the heart of the nation, how are we to interpret it? Are we to yield to despondency, and imagine that God has forsaken us? No, my friends, no! That is not its meaning. He is purging us still more, that is all. He is bidding us with a still louder voice to lift up our eyes to him, and to acknowledge him as the God of the nation. He is saying to us, with the most solemn, piercing, and yet reassuring accents, with which the voice of his Providence has yet fallen upon the ears of the nation: “Be still, and know of a surety that

I am God." "Fear not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God. I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness." It is yet too early to interpret the full meaning of this last awful Providence of God. But look at it from two points of view. Abraham Lincoln was in danger of becoming the nation's idol. He was so gentle, so honest, so magnanimous, so unselfish, so forgiving; his measures had been crowned with such astonishing and unlooked-for success, that there may have been danger that the nation, forgetting God, would fix its eyes upon him alone as the national Saviour and Redeemer. God hath taken away our head, as he took away Moses from his chosen people, that we might not worship him. From the summit of our national Nebo he permitted him to gaze upon the land of promise, and then hid his mortal body from our eyes, lest we should pay to him the homage for a deliverance wrought out by God alone. Look at it from another point of view. Abraham Lincoln died at the very zenith of his fame. He had done his work, and, as Romulus was rapt in a chariot of flame from the gaze of his astonished countrymen, so has he been rapt from the eyes of the nation, that he might live an almost spotless character, embalmed forever in the nation's heart, as the patron saint of its consummated

liberty. He has done, and done nobly and well, the work for which he was the chosen instrument of God. There remains still for the entire pacification of the country, the great work of Reconstruction. Who can assure us that the characteristics of our departed President, now of deathless and glorious memory, would have fitted him to accomplish with equal success a work like that? No man can say that they would not. No man can say that they would. One thing is certain, God has taken it out of his hands, and has assumed it himself. There are doubts, and fears, and indistinctness of vision, and conflicting theories upon this great subject rife throughout the land. "What shall be done with the black man?" you remember it well, was the horror-cry of the nation at the opening of the war. It was the Gordian knot which no human ingenuity could untie. Our late venerated President himself did not comprehend the solution of the problem. His words and his acts alike confessed it. But he placed himself in the hands of God, and God's Providence guided him to the solution. There exists no longer a doubt in the mind of any man, what is to be done with the black man. And now one more problem only remains to be solved, the great problem of Reconstruction. Let us be sure God's Providence will solve it and solve it aright. It is not

to be solved by doubts, nor fears, nor sympathies, nor antipathies, nor theories. It is not to be solved by man. It is to be solved by the holy Providence of God. From this point of view, very much do I incline to the sentiment of the orator of Fort Sumter: "It needs neither architect, nor engineer." God's Providence will build strongly and well the broken arches and buttresses of the temple of national freedom. "After the combatant," says De Tocqueville, "comes the legislator. The one pulls down, the other builds up. Each has his office." In a Republic like ours, the two functions are distinct, and belong to distinct branches of the government. God has guided the one. God will guide the other. Of one thing we may be sure. This last atrocious deed has taught the whole land the meaning of *Treason*; has convinced the whole land that it is a crime as much blacker and more horrible than simple murder, as the life of a great nation is more precious than the life of a single man. Of another thing we may be sure. We have been taught what Justice is. If standing among the thick heaped mounds of our patriot-dead, slaughtered by hundreds of thousands in this unholy rebellion, "until every drop of blood drawn by the lash *has been* paid by another drawn by the sword," we could have been persuaded by any sophistical argument derived from

the God-likeness of mercy, to receive the plotters and leaders of this awful crime into our confidence, we can be persuaded no longer. This last crime of ineffable turpitude has heaped up in the very heart of the nation a mound so broad and so long; it has piled it so high with mingled emotions of grief, horror and indignation, nay, with its deepest and most religious sentiment of the righteousness and the duty of retributive justice, that no arm of reconstruction will be long enough to reach over that mountain of woe, and grasp in its own the red right hand of Treason. The plotters and leaders in this terrible work of attempted national assassination are doomed. They are DOOMED. The mark of Cain is in their foreheads. And, at the very best, driven forth from the land whose soil they have polluted with Treason and drenched in blood, they are destined henceforth to become fugitives and vagabonds in the earth.

And now, O God, thou God of our Fathers, be thou our God, and the God of our children forever. Clouds and darkness are round about thee; but righteousness and judgment are the habitation of thy throne. Shrouded in these weeds of mourning, from the depths of our national woe, we still lift up our eyes unto Thee. Accept, we beseech thee, this awful baptism of blood in expiation of a na-



tion's sins. For four long and fearful years thy banner over us has been a banner of war, rent by the storm of battle, and stained with the life-blood of the slain. If thy strange work of retribution is not yet complete, still go forth with our patriot hosts, we implore thee, and guide our captains to victory. Yet we humbly supplicate thy mercy. Let the sacrifice already offered suffice. Henceforth, may thy banner over us be Love. Teach all our people to know Thee and to fear Thee. Guide our Rulers. Inspire them with thine own Spirit of Wisdom, Justice, Mercy, and Truth. Make our judges as at the first, and our counsellors as at the beginning. Henceforth may we be called the nation of righteousness; the faithful nation. Purged from the stains of our national transgressions, may this great people live before the Lord, our God, redeemed, purified, holy, free; and to thy great Name shall be the glory forever, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.









